

# **NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Overview and Scrutiny**

### **Interim Report of the O&S Re-Provision of the Environmental Services Contract Working Group**

#### **1 Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of the O&S Working Group was to:

- Help non-Executives understand the re provision process and the legal framework around the re-provision of the contract.
- Enable non-Executives to meaningfully challenge the rigour and robustness of the process.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to notify Cabinet on the interim outcome of the Scrutiny activity undertaken by the Working Group in response to the decision by Cabinet to re-provision the Environmental Services Contract.

#### **2 Context and Background**

2.1 Two non-Executive Councillors called in the decision of Cabinet of 16 November 2016, (item 11 – Re-Provision of the Environmental Services Contract). A Call-In Hearing was held on 29 November 2016. During the deliberation session, the Overview and Committee concluded that there was a need for wider consultation, the recommendations were ill-informed, based on assumptions regarding costs, before quality; the areas of methodology used were flawed; and the contracting out option had been based on a failing contract. The Committee further concluded that there was a need for Overview and Scrutiny involvement at the relevant stages of the process.

2.2 The Chair advised of the information received and asked the Committee to consider whether the Call-In would be upheld or not.

2.3 Upon a majority vote it was resolved that:

(1) That after all the evidence had been heard that the Call-In be accepted on the grounds that:

(i) there is the need for wider consultation;

- (ii) the recommendations were ill-informed, based on assumptions regarding costs, before quality;
- (iii) the areas of methodology used were flawed;
- (iv) the contracting out option had been based on a failing contract.

(2) That there is Overview and Scrutiny involvement in the relevant stages of the process.

- 2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee then convened a Working Group comprising Councillor Dennis Meredith (Chair), Councillor Rufia Ashraf (Deputy Chair); Councillors Aziz, Janice Duffy, Terrie Eales, Jamie Lane, Brian Sargeant, Zoe Smith and Graham Walker to carry out this Scrutiny activity.
- 2.3 This Scrutiny activity links to the Council's corporate priorities, particularly corporate priority - Working Hard and Spending your Money Wisely (Delivering quality modern services) and Protecting Our Environment (A clean and attractive town for residents and visitors).
- 2.4 A series of meetings were held that provided key information to the Scrutiny Working Group. Further meetings will be held during the process. A final report of the Working Group will be presented to Cabinet early in 2018.
- 2.5 The purpose of the meetings held so far was to:
- Help non-Executives understand the complex procurement process that was being followed.
  - Enable non-Executives to meaningfully challenge the rigour and robustness of the proposed process.

### **3 Conclusions and Key Findings**

- 3.1 The interim findings from Scrutiny activity are:
- 3.1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomed the comprehensive presentation given to the O&S Working Group its inaugural meeting and from the information provided to it supported the feedback and progress to date.
- 3.1.2 The O&S Working Group is satisfied that, from the information provided to it, the right processes have taken place to date. From the information provided

so far, the Working Group agreed that the processes to date have been robust and carried out with due diligence.

- 3.1.3 From the information received, the O&S Working Group gives its support for the robustness of the procurement process followed.

## **4 Recommendations**

- 4.1 The purpose of the O&S Working Group was to help non-Executives understand the re provision process and the legal framework around the re-provision of the contract and enable non-Executives to meaningfully challenge the rigour and robustness of the process.

The O&S Working Group therefore recommends to Cabinet that:

- 4.1.1 Cabinet considers the interim findings of the O&S Working as detailed in section 3 of this interim report.
- 4.1.2 Notes that, from the information provided to the Working Group to date, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is satisfied that the right processes have taken place to date. From the information provided so far the processes to date has been robust and carried out with due diligence.
- 4.1.3 Notes that, from the information received, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is satisfied that the procurement process has been robust.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 4.1.4 That the O&S Working continues with this Scrutiny activity and submits its final report to Cabinet at the end of the process.